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ABSTRACT

The "massification" of higher education in Australia and the associated increasing student diversity have significant implications for tertiary education. In particular, students seem to be struggling with the demands of tertiary literacy with commentators claiming that literacy standards are in decline. The solution has been to provide study skills support, in effect commodifying tertiary literacy, homogenizing it into a set of generic skills, which discounts the diversity of situated literacy practices within tertiary institutions. Against the background of increasing diversity, any successful literacy program needs to address two key issues, the situated literacy practices of different disciplinary areas and the kinds of literacy practices that students bring with them. This paper documents the evolution of situated programs that attempt to productively engage with these issues. The paper reviews the programs and strategies that project teams developed at James Cook University (Australia) to support students in their engagement with and appropriation of tertiary literacy practices. Its intention is not to critique the traditional "study skills" approach, but there is a need to move beyond a narrow generic skills based approach, or assumptions that students will somehow be able to "pick up" tertiary literacy practices, or, even more disturbing, draw on discourses of deficit to explain students' failure or lack of motivation. Contains 36 references. Appended is a diagnostic test. (NKA)

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# Engaging heterogeneity: Tertiary literacy in new times

Elizabeth Wyshe Hirst
James Cook University

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"Problematic futures: Educational research in an era of ... uncertainty"

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The nature of tertiary education has changed significantly in the current economic and global conditions. Within the constraints of the current funding model for tertiary education, key changes facing regional universities are, on the one hand the imperative to recruit greater numbers of students to ensure viability and on the other the increasing diversity of student' populations coupled with the lowering of tertiary entrance requirements. Particular disciplines in the university for example, Education and Nursing, with their large enrolments, are vulnerable to these changes. This "massification" of higher education (Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training, 2002, p. 15) and the associated increasing diversity have significant implications for tertiary education. In particular, students seem to be struggling with the demands of tertiary literacy (Reid, 1998) with commentators claiming that literacy standards are in decline (e.g., Illing, 2002). The solution has generally been to offer support through study skill units. These units tend to provide generic support, in effect commodifying tertiary literacy, homogenising it into a set of generic skills, which discounts the diversity of situated literacy practices within tertiary institutions. There is also a tendency to discount the diverse literacy practices that students bring to these institutions: "the sociolinguistic consequences of this heterogeneity are not adequately recognised either in university policies or in classroom practices" (Reid, 1998, p. viii). Against the background of increasing diversity, any successful literacy program needs to address two key issues, the situated literacy practices of different disciplinary areas and the kinds of literacy practices that students bring with them (Education Queensland, 2000). In this paper I document the evolution of situated programs that attempt to productively engage with these issues.

### *Supporting Tertiary Literacy*

The purpose of this paper is to review the programs and strategies that project teams developed to support students in their engagement with and appropriation of tertiary literacy practices. My intention it is not to critique the traditional 'study skills' approach. Indeed, these units have a significant role to play in facilitating the development of more situated programs. What is key is that their role in the University does not abrogate the responsibility of faculties and schools to mediate more equitable access to 'their' literacy practices. There is a need to move beyond a narrow generic skills based approach, or assumptions that students will somehow be able to 'pick up' tertiary literacy practices, or, even more disturbing draw on discourses of deficit to explain students' failure or lack of motivation. Building on an understanding of literacy, that it always operates in social and cultural contexts which are embedded in social goals and cultural practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 2000), the project team explored ways of rethinking how universities can best support the academic literacy needs of students (Hirst, Henderson, Allan, Bode, & Kocatepe, 2002). The contextually based approaches that were developed respond to Warwick's (1999) recognition that "systems of support for learning are as important as the delivery of subjects and courses" (Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training, 2002, p. 19)

These programs were developed within the School of Education at James Cook University, where, over the last few years it has become increasing clear that not all students are able to cope with the demands of tertiary literacy. At the same time, teacher accreditation agencies have been putting pressure on universities to produce highly literate and well-trained teachers of literacy (e.g. see Teacher Education Working Party, 2001). The School has, for the last three years, sought to respond to these challenges by


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both supporting students in their engagement with tertiary literacy and, at the same time, supporting lecturers to foreground and be more explicit about the literacy demands of their subjects. These programs have been funded by the university's equity program and aim to contribute to faculty equity objectives by increasing the success and retention rates of students from low socio-economic, rural, isolated and Indigenous backgrounds, and language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE), in their encounters with the tertiary literacy requirements and help them to master a repertoire of literacy practices.

### *Theoretical framing*

The design of these programs was based on a view of learning as a process of entering into a community by adopting its practices and beliefs in order to contribute to its ongoing conversations (Renshaw, 1998). For some students tertiary literacy practices are relatively similar to those they have already mastered and they comfortably join these conversations. For others, it is difficult to gain access to these implicit ways and assumptions (Ballenger, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Gee, 1990; Heath, 1986). Thus the aim of these programs was to develop strategies to both investigate the situated literacy practices of a particular academic community, and to facilitate students' participation in that community, with the intention of bridging the gap between students' current literacy practices and those of this academic community.

By viewing literacy as a set of practices, we moved from a focus on the psychological, where literacy is conceptualised as a set of transferable cognitive skills, to an approach that conceptualises literacy as a set of social practices which are always embedded in social and cultural contexts (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Luke & Elkins, 1998; Luke & Freebody, 1997; Teacher Education Working Party, 2001). This view identifies literacy practices as specific social practices of particular groups, or communities of practice, thus highlighting the contextual and situated nature of those practices. Inherent in this approach, is a view of tertiary literacy as a particular assemblage of literacy practices (Reid, 1998). These assemblages are constantly negotiated and contested, and involve privileging some practices whilst excluding others. Thus, rather than identifying competence in tertiary literacy as a set of 'basics' that students can acquire, this view of literacy considers the social nature of literacy in terms of ideologies, power relations, values and identities (Ivanic, 1998). In other words, tertiary literacy is "an active, dynamic and interactive practice" (Teacher Education Working Party, 2001, p. 4) that occurs within the social and cultural contexts of tertiary institutions.

Our approach to literacy and learning led us to consider the ways students engage with and participate in literacy practices, and to take into account social relationships and social contexts. We take the view that learning to engage in literate activities is accomplished much more as a function of participation within multiple contexts of social interaction than through completing specific sets of tasks (Kamberelis, 1995). Thus, we conceived learning not in terms of an individual's construction of mental representations of an objective reality, but as the appropriation of available cultural resources, or voices (Gee, 1990; 1992; Hicks, 1996; Wertsch, 1991; 1998).

Recognising the inherently social nature of learning means that when we engage students in the practices of tertiary literacy, we are asking them not only to appropriate and develop new ways of acting and thinking, but also to take on new ways of being, to take

up new identity practices. The appropriation of practices leading to cognitive change is, as Renshaw (1997) argues, "not simply a matter of conceptual development, but involves decisions regarding personal identity" (p. 25). Learning is always an ontological matter (Lave, 1993). Learners, whatever else they may be doing, are inevitably being constituted by and are reconstituting certain positions in the socially privileged practices of the community (Ivanic, 1998). Community here is not envisaged as some sort of utopian harmonious grouping deploying homogenous, agreed upon practices, but rather communities are constructed within political economies, comprising of contested relationships and inclusionary and exclusionary practices (Luke, in press). The trick then, is how to be recognised as a member of the community whilst at the same time contesting its exclusionary practices. In the following I review the programs that have been implemented over the last three years (1999-2002) designed to facilitate this outcome.

*Programs*

## Bridging Course

In the first two years of these programs we designed and offered 'bridging courses'. These courses aimed to help students develop the kind of literate practices required to engage with a core first-year education subject called *Language and Literacies in Education*. The project team at this stage comprised a lecturer and a tutor from the core education subject and a study skills learning adviser. As indicated, these programs were funded by the university's equity program. However, we found that identification of students who met the criteria of an equity category is not a simple process. From enrolment information we were able to gather some information but in the main relied on tertiary entrance scores as being a key indicator of students who might need support. This was based on data gathered from previous first year cohorts.

Initially the focus for these courses was on student writing, the most evident manifestation of literacy problems. Thus, prior to designing these courses we undertook an analyses of student writing, using Kaldor, Herriman, and Rochecouste's (1998) description of framing devices. These provided the starting point for both the framework and analytical strategies around which we were able to identify the literacy practices required of students and develop our own diagnostic instrument (see Appendix) (Allan & Hirst, 2000). Framing devices convey meta-messages which, Tannen (1989) argues, generally go unnoticed as they do their work because of the common-sense assumptions we attach to them. When students work within some discursive systems, they share communicative conventions and inhabit the same worlds of discourse as their teachers, these frames recede into the background and writing tends to be regarded as a direct unmediated expression of an individual's consciousness (MacLachlan & Reid, 1994). By the same token, if students are operating within other frames and are unfamiliar with discursive systems that are institutionally privileged they can be judged as having poor literacy practices. (Wodak, 1996) describes this conflict of frames: "worlds of knowledge and interest collide with one another, and these who possess linguistic as well as institutional power invariably prevail" (p. 2). However, the lack of recognition and hence deployment of particular frames may be a manifestation of implicit 'common sense' assumptions. This analytical framework provided a way of mapping student writing at the levels of macrostructure, content, rhetorical and vocabulary. From this mapping we designed tasks that would bring these frames to the fore (Allan & Hirst, 2000).


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During the one-day bridging course, held a week before the start of the semester, students were helped to participate with these framing devices as they analysed texts. These texts included a key reading from the core education subject and excerpts of student essay writing from the previous year. During the day students worked either individually, in small groups, or as a whole class as they identified why some of these texts were 'appropriate' and others were not, explicitly using the framing devices at different levels of analysis. Each task was designed to focus on one of the analytical levels. For example, in one task students identified clusters of content and another involved classifying the intersentential relationships of signalling, linking and sequencing. The final activity involved writing a mini essay, which was relevant to the main piece of assessment, an essay assignment in their core subject. Students started this writing task collaboratively in the classes and completed it independently. Central to our pedagogy was the provision of opportunities for students to participate, we organised this both formally and informally, and throughout the day we encouraged students to reflect on their prior experiences and their expectations of tertiary literacy. The mini essays students submitted were analysed and individual interviews conducted with students to give them feedback and help to re-write where necessary. Through these interactions we got to know the students and they got to know each other and us. In many cases these relationships persisted, and students acknowledged in interviews conducted later in the year that "knowing people helped", this included students as well as lecturers and tutors. In relation to this latter group they said they were "less shy about going to talk to them".

The results in the essay assignment indicate a significant success rate for those students who participated, however the level of participation was low. In the first year only half of the students targeted accepted invitations to participate and only half of these actually attended - 22 students. And only 10 of this group submitted mini-essays and received feedback. However, 8 of these achieved a pass or better in their essay assignment for the core subject, one failed and one withdrew. These figures were very similar in the following year.

As the program evolved and we reflected on our practices we discovered that we required other tools. The framing devices had provided a useful tool for analysing literacy practices, but we found that Luke and Freebody's (Freebody, 1993; Freebody & Luke, 1990, in press; Luke & Freebody, 1997, 1999) four resources framework, which is underpinned by similar theoretical foundations, helped us to develop a pedagogy that included a critical dimension. This model considers literacy not only in terms of the sustainability and mastery of repertoires of literacy practices, which integrated the notions of framing devices, but also includes the role of text analyst. Luke and Freebody (1999) argue that readers and writers should be able to take part in a range of literacy practices, including breaking the codes of texts, participating in the meanings of texts, using texts functionally, and critically analysing and transforming texts, to develop coding, semantic, pragmatic and critical competences . They emphasise that each practice is necessary, but none is sufficient by itself, to ensure that students can transform what they know about literacy to new situations and to deal with new forms of communication. This broader view of literacy, which recognises that literacy learning has social and political as well as cognitive and linguistic dimensions, allowed us to move beyond deficit views of individual students who struggled with tertiary literacy, towards a consideration of the social and how we could help students participate in and contest tertiary communities of practice as they develop repertoires of literacy practices.


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Thus, although the bridging courses had been successful for those students who had fully participated we recognised that in these programs literacy was still being conceptualised as an add-on, particularly as it was run prior to the semester. The chances of successful participation were limited by our strategy of offering support to students before they engaged with the literacy practices of the subject and before they realised they may need help in negotiating this new community of practice. The community of practice that developed in the bridging courses needed to be less tangential to and more situated in the community of practice represented by the core education subject.

## Whole School Approach

Building on our experiences and the data we had collected, in the third year we developed a new program. This time we applied for and received a more significant funding allocation. This additional funding enabled us to develop a whole school program, to collect data about the literacy practices from lecturers and students, to run literacy workshops for the academic staff in the School of Education, and to design and implement a more extensive and better 'situated' program. In the following I document some of the aspects of this program

### Situated literacy practices.

Data was collected from interviews with both lectures and students. Interviews with lecturers were conducted to ascertain the literacy practices that students are expected to engage with and master in each of the first year core education subjects. Initially lecturers were asked about the texts and specific genres used in their subjects and the strategies used to support students' as they developed the relevant literacy practices. Lecturers also indicated the problems students have with literacy. These interviews not only provided data about literacy requirements and practices but also had the effect of raising lecturers' awareness of the literacy demands of their subjects and the ways they help students negotiate texts that constitute their subject for example, readings, lectures, assessment criteria, and web pages.

There was evidence of widespread concern about students' literacy practices. This concern was generally expressed in terms of lack of mastery, for example an inability "to construct cohesive essays", "to use examples without understanding principles these example illustrate", "to understand articles, often they argue an opposing case when summarizing a text", "to tell whether their writing is reasonable", "to make transitions from journalistic, positivist and simplistic childish school writing to university writing", and "to synthesize ideas". This lack of mastery was coupled with literacy practices that were viewed as problematic which included "haphazard reading", "plagiarism, both from texts and from each other", and "decoding and encoding problems". Additionally there were some comments that located these problems in the students for example, "boys don't seem to be intellectually engaged", "girls are good at stickers, cut out articles and project stuff" and students "aren't motivated".

The support offered to students in developing their tertiary literacy practices varied. Some lecturers argued that it was either not their role to provide this support because, "a certain level of literacy is expected and readings are not considered difficult", "texts are easy, they are written in everyday language"; there was an assumption that, literacy had

been "covered in first semester"; that it was not possible to give support because of the large numbers of students or indeed that this support should not be offered, "students have come to expect too much support from their experience of Yr 12". It was suggested that if students have problems they can "ask a tutor or a lecturer". Nevertheless, some lecturers provided significant systematic support for students and outlined some of their strategies for example, choosing accessible texts that had pre-reading questions, margin notes, or other features to guide and assist students' meaning making; identifying the genre of the text by analyzing the macro-structure; and directing students to find key terms and associated definitions. Also, some lecturers explicitly engage students in literacy practices such as skim reading, establishing a purpose for reading, identifying linguistic signaling devices, and making more appropriate vocabulary choices. Facilitating the establishment of study groups was another strategy.

The data gathered from interviews with first year students provided an insight into the strategies they use to negotiate subject texts, and the kind of support they receive and find useful. Study groups were one strategy that were generally considered useful, being able to discuss readings with others and to share the workload were obvious advantages. However, there were others who found them frustrating, "people crib your ideas and don't contribute". Negotiating subject texts varied, some found them straightforward whilst others found them difficult, "sometimes I can't make sense of it", "the biggest problem is to understand, to take it in and not tune out", whilst other students admitted they did no reading at all and were still able to pass the subject. The strategies utilised to make meaning from these texts ranged from "discussing with friends", "read and summarise" to "read and hope for the best". Strategies offered by lecturers were considered useful, though more would be appreciated for example, making explicit links between readings and the lecture. There was an indication that some students feel inadequately prepared to deal with the amount and level of reading expected and would like some support because, "it's daunting not to have anything before you get there [University]" and "it took me about three weeks to work out what was going on".

**School literacy workshops.**

The data collected informed the design of a two-day literacy workshop for academic staff in the School of Education from both Townsville and Cairns campuses. The aim of these workshops was to establish a common vocabulary for talking about literacy and to develop understandings about literacy demands we make of students and the literacy standards required in School of Education programs. Additionally we outlined a number of teaching strategies, and worked to regularise statements and practices concerning literacy requirements across subjects, as reflected in subject outlines and assignment criteria statements.

To achieve these outcomes we arranged for Associate Professor Peter Freebody, co-developer of the four resources framework, to address staff. He framed up the workshop in terms of current approaches to literacy, the centrality of literacy in all subjects and hence the imperative for lecturers to help students to appropriate what are, for many of them, new practices. These students in many cases do not have the cultural or linguistic capital to work out the 'mysterious demands' of texts. Students need opportunities for scaffolded engagement to practices, they cannot be expected to just 'pick them up' or master them immediately. The four resources model provides a way of analysing and



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interrogating our teaching practices. In the working groups that followed this address we used the four resources model to interrogate current assessment criteria statements used in first year subjects. These were considered both in terms of ease of interpretation and the ways in which they included literacy criteria. We found, for example, that in some cases literacy criteria were quite explicit and integrated into the criteria, whilst in others literacy was implicit, or an 'add-on' carrying no assessment weight, almost an afterthought following the content criteria.

These sessions provided an opportunity for lecturers to reflect on and change their practices. The following is an indication of the some of the ways the the School of Education appropriated these ideas and changed its practices.

- Curriculum group meeting: considered how to sequence literacy development through the degree and how to provided sustained support for particular literacy practices to give students opportunities to develop mastery. An issue that emerged is that students are often expected to produce complex essays in the early part of degree and later use more school-based genres for example, unit plans.
- Literacy group meeting: considered broader ways of assessing students' literacy levels, a requirement for the Board of Teacher Registration. The current test reflects a narrow view of literacy, it is at the level of code breaking.
- General meeting: One lecturer described how he had changed his assessment criteria and included more explicit reference to literacy, and how this, in turn, had led to changing the subject outcomes. Through these practices, he suggested, he had further developed his own understanding of the literacy demands he was making of students, and would in future be more explicit to students using the vocabulary of the four resources framework.
- Professional experience unit and School based educators meeting: this group considered the literacy criteria in the professional experience booklets. From previous reporting data it was clear that literacy had often been defined narrowly with a tendency to judge pre-service teachers on their blackboard writing and spelling. This meeting provided a forum to consider literacy in broader terms with examples of different ways of assessing pre-service teachers' literacy for example, as text users of school based genres like report cards.
- Graduate Qualities: here we considered how literacy could be included more centrally in the graduate quality statements.

**Apprenticeship in Academic Literacy.**

A key component of the whole school approach was the Apprenticeship in Academic Literacy course. This course, designed for the 2002 cohort of students, was more extensive, due to increased funding, and also built on the understandings and experiences of the previous bridging courses. The project team that collaborated to design, plan and teach this short course comprised five University staff (three of us had been part of the original project team): the study skills learning adviser, and four from the School of Education (Hirst et al., 2002). This latter group teach and research in the School and have been engaged in a wide range of teaching areas including literacy, special needs education, linguistics, TESOL and second language education. Our common interests in literacy and in equity matters underpinned the formation of the team and the project provided an opportunity for us to work collaboratively with a diverse student group.

As in previous programs we used tertiary entrance scores to target students. Additionally, the new design of the course meant, in the first week of the semester, we were able to invite students to join the program. This gave students the opportunity to self-select, if they believed they belonged to any of the equity groups. This not only increased the numbers of students participating but also facilitated their participation as they were already on campus. The students who participated in the program were a diverse group, but included high proportions of low socio-economic and rural students, and mature-age and first-generation university students. Few were Indigenous or LBOTE students.

To further develop the "situatedness" of literacy practices, we designed this course to run alongside rather than prior to the subject *Language and Literacies in Education*. The course was organised in five two-hour workshops, starting in the second week of the semester. Each of the project team was responsible for one workshop, and we employed one support tutor for each workshop from the School's third year education student cohort. These were students who had achieved strong results in the core first year subject. As students coming near to becoming members of the teaching profession, a strong interest for them was to be part of a teaching/learning experience. We also made a provision for support tutors to be available for consultation with students from their workshop.

The focus of the workshops changed, from writing to reading, based on the data collected in interviews with both students and lecturers. The readings in the core education subject constituted the texts for the course. These readings were also central to essay assignment in this subject, thus providing a very real goal for the 10-hour workshop program. Our intention was to design tasks that required us to 'shunt' between the four roles of the literate in every workshop, making these moves explicit to our students. During the planning process we, the project team, constructed our students and ourselves as active participants, people who bring diverse cultural resources to these tasks. Whilst our aim was to develop their literacy practices, our own literacy and pedagogical practices also developed as a community of practice which we have documented elsewhere (Hirst et al., 2002). The following is an excerpt from that paper which describes some of the workshop practices and the ways in which we negotiated with texts using the four resources model

> The essay topic for the subject required students to engage with Gee's (1990) concept of Discourse, and the introduction to *Social linguistics and literacies* was included in course readings. In the first week of the program, we used this text to introduce the strategy of identifying the topic sentence in each paragraph, making a margin note of the main point, and using these notes to chart the development of the argument through a section of the writing. As the Gee reading is flagged as central to the essay assignment, a number of the students had already worked through it, as could be seen from their heavily highlighted texts.
>
> From their comments, it seemed that this task gave the students a more selective awareness that one point in the paragraph is the main one and that other information is likely to have the function of expanding or exemplifying the main point. One reflection from the team about this task suggested that it helped make explicit a feature of academic writing that is



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not self-evident to some students. Whilst the reading task may have helped students develop practical understandings of how to make one main point per paragraph in their own writing, we also saw it as a task that foregrounds the text user role, by raising awareness of a structural feature of academic argument.

In another session, it became evident that some students were unable to engage effectively with dense and complex texts. They were quick to identify that unfamiliar vocabulary or complex embedded sentences make a text difficult to comprehend, and most explained that they would simply consult a dictionary to solve the problem. We took the opportunity to model how we would tackle this problem, demonstrating how contextual clues in the paragraph can help predict meaning and how the identification of suffixes or prefixes attached to a word can assist meaning-making. We also showed ways of analysing sentences into clauses and identifying the processes and participants. For some of the students, these were 'new' skills. For others, however, they were skills they already employed but had never explicitly thought about. They commented that our modelling had made them realise that code-breaking is a role they take up regularly. In this way, it boosted their confidence to realise that they did in fact have a repertoire of literacy practices to draw on and develop, even if it was limited. For us, the task had foregrounded the taken-for-granted nature of the skills and strategies that we employ and the necessity of making these explicit to those learning new literacy practices.

Using a dictionary to solve a code-breaking problem also provided a forum to develop text analyst roles. It is not uncommon for students to use general-purpose dictionaries to define subject-specific terms in their essays, rather than using definitions provided in the subject. It seems that dictionaries are regarded as more 'reliable' or 'truthful', an assumption led us to interrogate this 'normalising' practice and to disrupt the notion that knowledge is fixed. Students used various sources to find definitions of key subject words, then considered the audiences for the definitions and the discourses in which the definitions were considered valid. (p.10-12)

The outcomes of this program are difficult to quantify. What I can report on are the results in the core education subject. Of the 57students enrolled, 37 students participated in at least four of the sessions. Of this group, 88% passed the essay requirements for the subject. This compares with a pass rate of 45% for a similar cohort of students who were targeted but did not attend, and was significantly better than the overall pass rate for the subject of 70%. In an essay assignment that was required for a concurrent introductory education subject later in the semester, 85% of the students who had attended the workshops passed. This compares with a pass rate of 61% of the similar cohort of students who did not attend the workshops.

Clearly these are excellent results, but they do not tell the whole story. The quality of the interactions in the workshops demonstrated the emergence of communities of practice. Students began to share their experiences in this first encounter with university practices and their approaches to assignments. Students' comments during and after the workshops

indicated their growing awareness of academic literacy practices and their developing repertoire of skills and strategies. They identified the skills that had been practised, such as mind mapping, skimming, scanning, and note taking as particularly relevant in helping them to engage effectively with their readings by identifying voices which they could then deploy in their essay writing. Students often described this in terms of 'tricks,' a description which suggests that these practices are often invisible. Rather than seeing themselves as passive learners, involved in merely digesting course related information, students started to take up identities as active members of a discourse community. This extended beyond the requirements of the immediate subject, as students acknowledged that the repertoire developed in the workshops could be transferred and drawn on to facilitate their participation in other subjects.

According to most students, their developing relationships - with each other, the support tutors and the project team - were the major benefits of the workshops. Small class size, they commented, was conducive to learning, by facilitating class discussions and allowing them to think aloud and to formulate their ideas and understandings. This had allowed them to get to know each other, to value each others' perspectives and to learn from each other. Constructing opportunities for diversity and engagement was evident in one student's written evaluation - "It is good to reflect on things with others and gain better (or different) insights to various aspects". Students saw our roles and the roles of the support tutors as contributing to their learning as well. Some commented that it was good "to know that there was extra help when I needed it" or "to have a support tutor to contact for input/editing/help/refocus". In this sense, they started to see themselves as a community of learners, and these communities continued to evolve and address new goals. Although many students commented that the workshops should have been extended beyond the five weeks of the program, some had organised to continue as a study group after the workshops ended.

In light of the feedback received from the students, it can be said that the students' apprenticeship in academic literacy was successful. The workshops had created the time and space to encourage students to participate with and try our new literacy and new identity practices, and to reconceptualize learning as a community activity. One student summed up her experience of the workshops, 'I'm glad I was regarded as disadvantaged. I learned so much'.

*Conclusion*

Funding for these programs is on a one-off basis; equity grants are applied for and are judged on their viability, they are not designed to support on-going projects. Consequently programs like these are not sustainable within the current funding model for higher education and although clearly successful there is no guarantee that these programs can continue. Indeed, it seems unlikely that these labour intensive programs can survive in the current market driven agenda of today's universities (Bessant, 2002). Current trends towards 'new efficiencies' and the 'commodification' of education (Connell, 2002) would favour the model of 'skill' delivery and accountability. However, this does not address the situatedness of literacy practices or the centrality of the social in education. By accepting greater numbers of students from increasingly diverse backgrounds we have a moral responsibility to make our practices visible and available and not deny students the opportunity to participate by retreating from social to


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psychological models of literacy development and a tendency to reframe of diversity as deficiency. We need to develop educational practices that grow from an understanding of the importance of human relationships and the importance of communities of practice in learning, supporting students not only to engage successfully in academic communities but developing ways of contesting the kinds of people they are called up to be by these communities.

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Appendices

Diagnostic Test

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.0 | *Macrostructure Problem* |
| 1.1 | Insufficient signaling; difficult to understand the relationship between components, essay unclear, rambles, *e.g. little use of cohesive ties to guide reader; no signalling of more/less important points* |
| 1.2 | Material not synthesized into related levels of importance (hierarchy) - *e.g. paras cover more than one main topic; undifferentiated sequence of details* |
| 1.3 | Absence of macrostructure - no apparent control over the order of the content; stated intentions not fulfilled *e.g. repeated/misplaced content* |
| 1.4 | Imbalance in the macrostructure, *e.g. more detail on one side of the argument than the other; little or no introduction/conclusion* |
| 2.0 | *Content Problems* |
| 2.1 | Discontinuous content, e.g. *cluster elements scattered both within and between paragraphs* |
| 2.2 | Inappropriate ordering, *e.g. specific - general* |
| 2.3 | Omission or partial omission of relevant information *e.g. incomplete definition, omits key concepts* |
| 2.4 | Inclusion of extraneous information, content irrelevant or too general |
| 2.5 | *Incorrect content* |
| 3.0 | *Inter/Intra Sentential Problems* |
| 3.1 | Zero components -implication of preceding information that has been omitted, *e.g. "the"* |
| 3.2 | Over and under signaling, *e.g. signals opposing argument without following through or vice versa* |
| 3.3 | No rhetorical function, *e.g. empty phrase or sentence* |
| 3.4 | Cohesion - conjunctions, *e.g. incorrect use or missing conjunction* |
| 3.5 | Cohesion - pronoun, *e.g. reference* |
| 4.0 | *Vocabulary Problems* |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.1 | Register and style - *e.g. use of second person, colloquial language* |
| 4.2 | Collocation - combination of words that normally do not co-occur, *e.g. incorrect choice of preposition* |
| 4.3 | Taxonomic - superordinate/subordinate relationships; classification problems, *e.g. 'fact' instead of 'opinion'* |
| 4.4 | Selects inappropriate lexical items |
| 4.6 | Spelling |
| 5.0 | *Grammatical problems* |
| 5.1 | Prepositions/relative pronoun relationship |
| 5.2 | Agreement between subject and verb |
| 5.3 | Punctuation |

Developed by Allan and Hirst (2000), adapted from Kaldor, Herriman and Rochecouste (1998)

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